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# Faisalabad ATC sends Hamid Raza to jail

• Orders SIC chief to serve 10-year prison term in May 9 riots case • Islamabad police briefly detained the ex-MNA at G-14 checkpoint before handing him over to Faisalabad police • PHC earlier rejected his plea for transit bail in the same case • Family plans to approach LHC for stay order and appeal against conviction

By Tariq Saeed

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad District and Sessions Judge Waseem Mubarik, acting as anti-terrorism court (ATC) judge, on Friday sent Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) Chairman Sahibzada Hamid Raza to the Central Jail Faisalabad to serve a 10-year sentence in a case pertaining to the attack on an intelligence agency's office during May 9 riots.

Earlier, Islamabad police briefly had detained the SIC before handing him over to the Faisalabad police for further legal action.

The case had been registered against the SIC chief and several others by the Civil Lines Police, Faisalabad, for attacking the agency's office during the unrest.

Speaking to the media outside the court, Sahibzada Hasan Raza, the brother of the SIC head, said that Mr Hamid was arrested by Islamabad police at a checkpoint on the Islamabad Bypass late Thursday night while travelling from Peshawar to Faisalabad to surrender himself in connection with the sentence awarded by the ATC.

He said that Faisalabad's Civil Lines Police had brought Mr Raza from Islamabad to Faisalabad and produced him before the ATC, which confirmed his conviction in the case registered under FIR No. 832/23 at Civil Lines Police Station. The court, presided over by then ATC Judge Javed Iqbal Sheikh, had sentenced him to 10 years in prison.

It may be mentioned that two days earlier, the Peshawar High Court had rejected Mr Raza's plea seeking transit bail in connection with his conviction in the May 9 riots case.

Following his conviction by the Faisalabad ATC, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) disqualified him and declared his NA-104 seat vacant. A by-election for the seat is scheduled to be held on Nov 23.

Mr Raza said that the family intended to move the LHC to seek a stay order against the upcoming by-election for the vacated seat and also file an appeal before the LHC challenging the ATC's verdict that awarded Mr Raza 10-year imprisonment.

**SIC chief detained**

Earlier, the capital police briefly detained Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) chief Hamid Raza before handing him over to the Faisalabad police for further legal action in connection with the 10-year imprisonment awarded to him by a court of law.

A senior police officer told *Dawn* that a police team intercepted a vehicle at an entry checkpoint set up at G-14 during the early hours of Friday. The police officials found and recognised SIC chief Hamid Raza sitting in the vehicle along with a couple of people.

Senior police officials were immediately informed about Mr Raza's presence at the checkpoint. Following their directions, the occupants of the vehicle were taken into custody and shifted to a police station where they were briefly detained.

The capital police also informed their counterparts in Faisalabad about Mr Raza's detention. In response, a Faisalabad police team arrived in Islamabad and Mr Raza was handed over to them.

The Faisalabad police later left Islamabad before sunrise.

*Munawer Azeem in Islamabad also contributed to this report*

# Islamabad, Baku vow to cement trade, defence ties

• Pakistan, Iran pledge more anti-terror cooperation • Cabinet meeting put off 'due to PM's commitments'

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Azerbaijan on Friday reiterated their resolve to further cement their cooperation in the fields of trade and investments, energy, connectivity and defence.

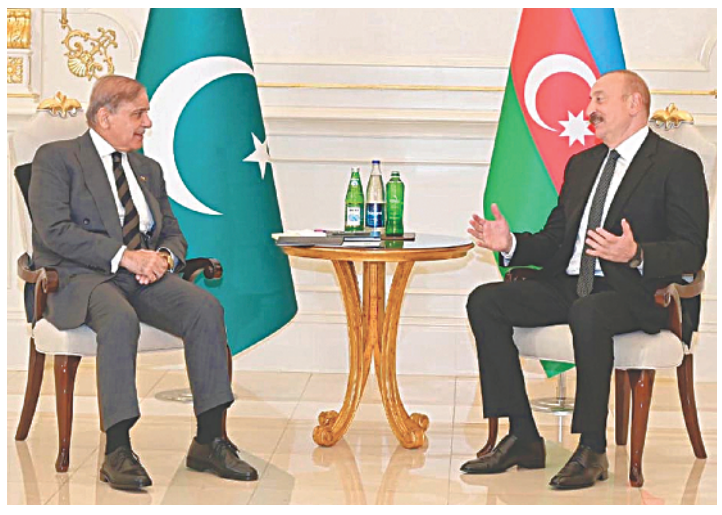
The two sides made the pledge during a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Azerbaijan President Illham Aliyev in Baku. PM Shehbaz is currently in Azerbaijan to attend the celebration ceremony of Azerbaijan's victory day.

Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir was also present during the meeting.

"The two leaders reviewed the whole range of bilateral relationship and agreed to further strengthen their multi-layered cooperation in the fields of trade and investments, energy, connectivity and defence," says a press release issued by the Prime Minister's Office on Friday.

During the meeting held at Presidential Palace, the PM thanked the President Aliyev for extending invitation to attend the celebration of the Victory Day of Azerbaijan.

The prime minister felicitated the government and people of Azerbaijan on the victory day which is observed to commemorate the victory in the 44-day-long Karabakh Liberation War against Armenia. He extended an invitation to the president of Azerbaijan to visit Pakistan at his earlier convenience, which the latter accepted.



BAKU: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets President of Azerbaijan Illham Aliyev.—APP

**Pakistan-Iran cooperation**

Meanwhile, Pakistan and Iran on Friday vowed to enhance cooperation to eradicate terrorism in the two states and reiterated their firm commitment for peaceful means of dialogue and diplomacy for resolution of all outstanding disputes around the world.

The two sides also expressed eagerness to foster cooperation with each other in the fields of mutual interest including economic development and bilateral trade.

The commitments were made when Iranian Speaker Dr Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf called on PM Shehbaz, the PM Office said.

"Both countries condemn state-sponsored terrorism and have always supported each other in the wake of unilateral aggression against their sovereign states," the press release quoted the PM as saying.

The prime minister said Pakistan and Iran had unfortunately been victims of terrorism and thus firmly shared the resolve of global peace, prosperity and positive cooperation in the region. "Pakistan and Iran are determined to work in cohesion and cooperation for the unity of Muslim Ummah," he added.

**Cabinet meeting**

Meanwhile, a meeting of the federal cabinet that was scheduled to be held on Friday, was postponed due to PM Shehbaz's commitments, sources in the PM Office said.

However, some were of the opinion that the meeting was put off due to a lack of consensus between the ruling PML-N and the PPP over the 27th Constitutional Amendment.

# UN says Afghan arrests in Pakistan spike by 146pc in one week

Links the surge to reopening of border crossings; reveals Balochistan is epicentre of the crackdown

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: The number of Afghan nationals arrested and detained in Pakistan surged by 146 per cent in a single week, a spike linked to the reopening of border crossings, according to a joint report by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

A total of 7,764 Afghan nationals were arrested and detained in the week ending Nov 1, a significant increase from the previous week, the report said.

Of those arrested between Oct 26 and Nov 1, Afghan Citizen Card (ACC) holders and undocumented Afghans accounted for 77pc, while Proof of Registration (PoR) card holders represented the remaining 23 pc, it added.

The report noted that 86pc of the arrests and detentions occurred in Balochistan. Across the country, the top three districts for arrests and detentions between Jan 1 and Nov 1, 2025, were Chagi, Attock and Quetta.

The rate of returns and deportations also rose sharply in the last week of October. According to the UN data, the number of returns increased by 101pc and deportations by 131pc compared to the week of Oct 19-25.

The figures climbed from 18,630 returns, including 3,341 deportations, in the previous week to 37,448 returns, including 7,733 deportations, in the week ending Nov 1.

"This notable increase is primarily attributed to the reopening of the Chaman border, with Torkham also reopening on Nov 1," the report stated.

From Sept 15, 2023, to Nov 1, 2025, a cumulative total of 1,667,713 individuals have returned to Afghanistan.

For the returns from Oct 26 to Nov 1, the largest group was PoR holders at 47pc, followed by undocumented individuals at 44pc and ACC holders at 8pc. In contrast, deportees during the same period were overwhelmingly undocumented at 93pc.

The report found that fear of arrest was the primary reason for return among 93pc of undocumented individuals and ACC holders, and for 39pc of PoR holders, since April 1, 2023.

The recent activity follows several government directives issued this year impacting Afghan nationals.

In July, the government ordered the repatriation of PoR card holders following the expiration of their card validity on June 30, later setting a Sept 1 deadline for them to leave Pakistan.

# Over 7,500 women murdered in four years, minister tells NA

Total 173,367 domestic violence cases, including 1,553 honour killing incidents, reported

By Amir Wasim

ISLAMABAD: Over 7,500 women, including 1,553 in the name of honour, were murdered in the country in four years from 2021 to 2024.

This horrible data was presented by Minister for Human Rights Azam Nazeer Tarar in the National Assembly on Friday in a written reply to a question asked by Naeema Kishwar Khan of the JUI-F.

According to the minister, the data has been compiled by National Police Bureau which shows that that 17,771 cases of rape and gang-rape of women were reported during the four-year period. The document reveals that 121 women were subjected to sexual assault during the custody.

During the same period, 9,799 women were subjected to brutality by men within their own homes whereas a total of 632 cases of sexual harassment at workplaces were reported.

The figures show that a total of 173,367 different cases of violence against women were reported all over the country in four years. Despite government's claims to have taken a number of steps to prevent such incidents, the data shows a gradual increase every year in such cases as 30,757 cases were reported in 2021, 35,477 in 2022, 46,036 in 2023 and 61,997 cases in 2024.

The data shows that most of the women were murdered in year 2023 when a total of 2,459 women were killed. The number includes 392 incidents of honour killings. Moreover, 127 cases of acid throwing were also reported during the four-year period.

The number of women kidnapped in four years remained very high with 89,599 such cases.

Giving explanation, Mr Tarar, who also holds the portfolio of law and justice ministry, said the incidents of violence against women were noticed in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces due to entrenched societal norms and weak enforcement, which were being addressed through continuous efforts.

He said that appropriate action on such incidents, such as Shanti in Karachi and Sidra Arab of Rawalpindi, had been taken in accordance with the law.

Highlighting various measures taken by the government, he said the violence against women remained a serious concern for the government, stating that the reported cases have shown fluctuations in different provinces and regions. He said there was a general trend of increased reporting of the incident due to greater awareness, improved access to justice mechanisms, and enhanced media coverage. This reflects growing confidence in the system to report such crimes, he added.

Earlier, at the start of the Question Hour, opposition PTI lawmakers staged a walkout leaving behind Iqbal Afridi to point out lack of quorum in an effort to disrupt the assembly proceedings.

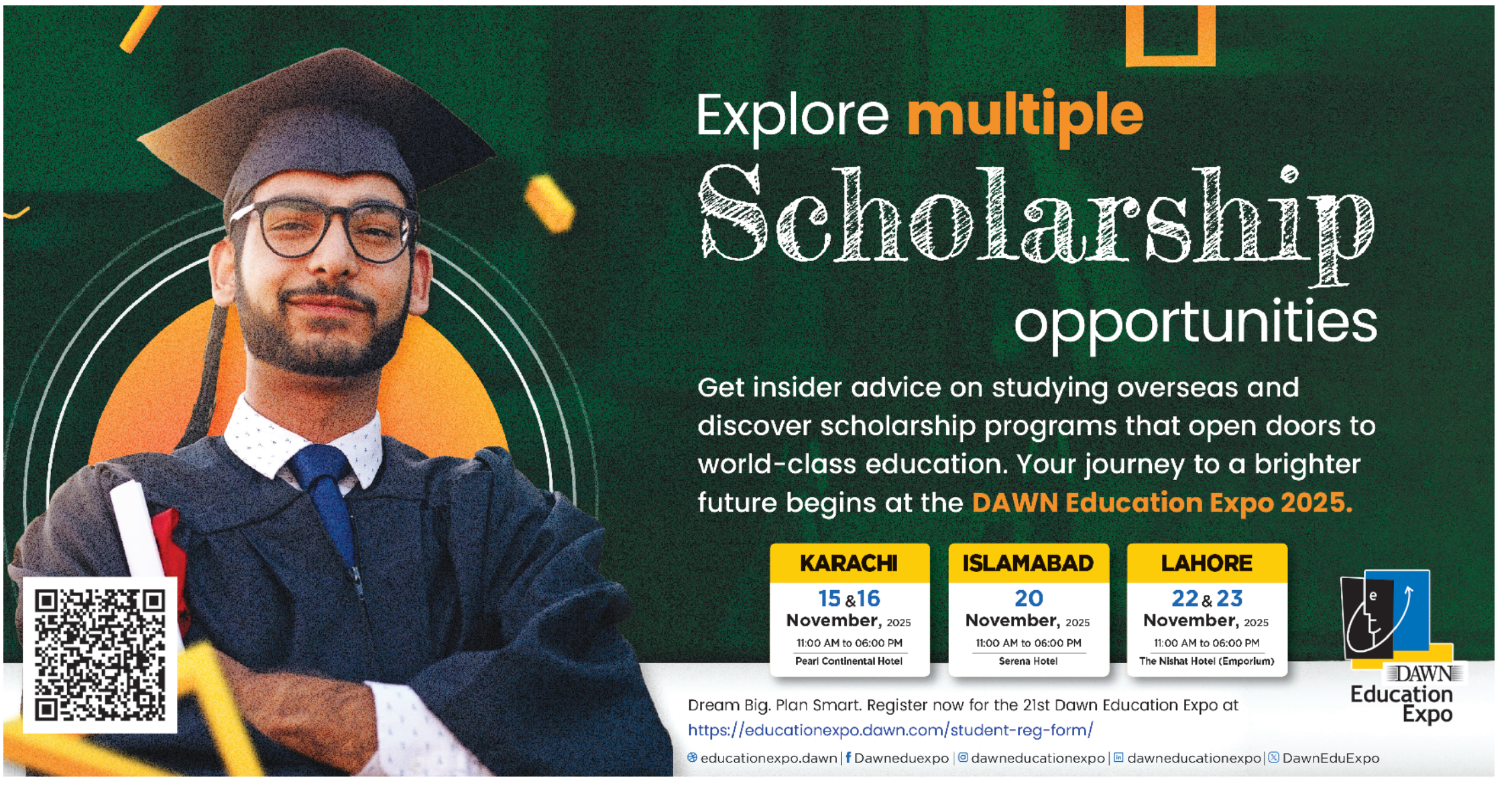
However, Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah declared the house in order after a headcount. In order to maintain quorum, the presence of a minimum of 84 lawmakers is required in the house.

Later, the PTI members returned to the house and participated in the proceedings.

PTI's Sher Afzal Marwat drew the attention of the chair towards the absence of the ministers from the house. He regretted that only a couple of ministers were present in the house.

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry tabled two bills — the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2025, and the Netting of Financial Arrangements Bill, 2025 — during the lacklustre proceedings of the house. The bills were referred to standing committees concerned.

The National Assembly will now meet on Monday evening at 4.30pm.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